

Appendix 10 - Supporting Learning

Libraries offer a wide range of learning activities and opportunities for all ages that increase the skills of our residents. As community venues, libraries are also used by partner organisations to deliver health promotion sessions.

Libraries are also a key community venue for residents signposting to other opportunities in communities

In 2024, Manchester was officially recognised as a UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning, in recognition of the city's efforts to make lifelong learning a reality for all. The application was co-designed with 150+ organisations, with many more also contributing to the city's lifelong learning approach, from basic through to higher education. Our libraries are a key partner, as a venue to host learning opportunities for families and across communities.

Co-location with Manchester Adult Education Service

A number of libraries co-locate with Manchester Adult Education Service – Longsight Library and Learning Centre, Avenue Library and Learning Centre and Forum Library is located directly next to MAES in the Forum Centre. Last year this was extended to Newton Heath Library. This co-location is proving successful with services working successfully together, enabling Newton Heath residents to receive multiple services under one roof.

Direct provision of learning

Over 100 hours per month of learning sessions per month are delivered across libraries. There is a wide range of learning activities delivered such as Manchester Adult Education Service (in libraries not co-located with MAES), Talk English Circles, IT drop ins and Music lessons for children at Longsight Library from the Olympus Music Foundation. Taster sessions were delivered by learning organisations in 8 libraries during Festival of Libraries in June and Festival of Learning Week in September – this will occur again this year.

Literacy

Libraries support literacy of children and adults. Literacy is a key determinant of quality of life and libraries play a key role from provision of free access to books, being a venue for Read Easy which support basic literacy in adults, and through a wide range of Read Manchester initiatives as detailed in Appendix 5.

Digital Skills

Digital skills and inclusion are crucial to Manchester's status as a UNESCO City of Lifelong Learning, reflecting the city's commitment to lifelong learning initiatives. By 2030, it is projected that over 85% of jobs will require advanced digital skills.

Libraries provide free access to the Internet and the range of online learning opportunities including Learn My Way. Library staff and volunteers also provide support and skills development to residents. Weekly IT drop-in sessions take place in each library, providing an extra level of support and skills development to customers. The libraries digital inclusion team also offers telephone support to Manchester residents through digital champion volunteers.

Supporting businesses and entrepreneurs

The Business and IP Centre and Generator Spaces provide skills training to increase residents job prospects and for entrepreneurs and business start-ups. The team also provides higher level IT skills provision such as social media, 3D printing etc.